

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 619

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID

SUBJECT: OICI PROPOSAL

REF: STATE 089777

1. OICI PROPOSAL RECEIVED APRIL 22, AND LOCAL OIC REPRESENTATIVE PASSED TO GOT FOR COMMENTS. AIDOFF ASSIGNED TO MISSION IS ON TDY ELSEWHERE AND HAS NOT SEEN THIS PROPOSAL. MISSION'S FOLLOWING COMMENTS, HOWEVER, DO REFLECT THOSE OF TDY AIDOFF FROM COTONOU. MISSION DOES NOT HAVE COMPETENCE TO ADDRESS TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF PROJECT AND ASSUMES THAT ADO/NIAMEY AND SUITABLE OFFICES IN AID/W ARE LOOKING INTO THESE. WE DO, HOWEVER, HAVE SEVERAL RESERVATIONS AS TO GENERAL OUTLINES OF PROGRAM, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, WHICH WE BELIEVE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED DURING PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS.

2. REGARDING OIC ORGANIZATION IN US, MISSION HAS BEEN AWARE SINCE PROJECT FIRST PROPOSED THAT OIC HAS NEVER UNDERTAKEN AN AGRICULTURAL PROJECT. THUS, PERSONNEL IMPLEMENTING THIS ONE WOULD HAVE TO BE FOUND ELSEWHERE. SUCCESS OF PROJECT WILL DEPEND GREATLY ON QUALITY OF EXPATRIATE TECHNICAL PERSONNEL BROUGHT IN TO IMPLEMENT IT.

3. PROJECT PROPOSAL IMPRESSES MISSION AS WORTHWHILE BUT AMBITIOUS. ITS EMPHASIS UPON "SELF-HELP" IS PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE FOR ZKO. TO NON-TECHNICAL ANALYST, IT APPEARS GENERALLY WELL-PLANNED BUT MORE COMPLEX (FOOD PRODUCTION, LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INFRASTRUCTURE) THAN WE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT DESIRABLE FOR INITIAL

STAGE OF PROJECT. KEY CONSIDERATION NOW, IN MISSION'S VIEW, IS RELATIONSHIP, YET TO BE ESTABLISHED, BETWEEN LOCAL OIC GROUP AND GOT. PROMPTNESS AND NATURE OF GOT'S RESPONSE TO PROPOSAL WILL INDICATE IN SOME MEASURE OIC'S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH GOT.

4. SPECIFICALLY, INTEGRATION OF PROJECT INTO MINISTRY OF RURAL EQUIPMENT AND OVER-ALL TOGOLESE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE IS UNCLEAR TO US. FOR EXAMPLE, EXTENSION AGENTS WILL BE GOING OUT FROM PROJECT CENTERS TO WORK WITH LOCAL FARMERS; PRESUMABLY MINISTRY OF RURAL EQUIPMENT HAS SIMILAR AGENTS. THERE IS DANGER OF DUPLICATION WHICH MIGHT BE OVERCOME BY USING OIC PROJECT TO TRAIN AGENTS ALREADY EMPLOYED BY GOVERNMENT. TO DO SO, HOWEVER, WOULD REQUIRE FAR MORE INTEGRATION OF PROJECT INTO GOT THAN SEEMS ENVISAGED IN TRAINING OUTLINED IN PROPOSAL, AGAIN SIGNALING NEED FOR EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL OIC BOARD AND GOT. MOREOVER, QUESTION OF GOT FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION, FOR EXAMPLE, IS NOT YET OF CONCERN TO LOCAL GROUP, WHICH BELIEVES IT IS FIRST NECESSARY FOR OIC PHILOSOPHY TO CATCH FIRE AND PRODUCE WORTHWHILE RESULTS, THEREBY ATTRACTING GOT INPUT.

5. OIC'S TOGOLESE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IS NOT PARTICULARLY PRESTIGIOUS. ITS SECRETARY/SPOKESMAN HAS NO REGULAR JOB. ITS DIRECTOR, WHILE PROMINENT BUSINESSMAN, HAS REPUTATION FOR NOT HONORING HIS DEBTS. THUS, WE ARE CONCERNED WITH ROLE LOCAL OIC WILL HAVE TO PLAY IN THIS PROJECT.

6. PROGRAM PLACES GREAT EMPHASIS ON COOPERATIVES, BOTH FOR PRODUCTION PURPOSES, AND FOR SUCH ENDEAVORS AS CREDIT UNION. COOPERATIVES HAVE NOT BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY SUCCESSFUL IN TOGOLESE CONTEXT. WE ARE NOT SAYING THEY WILL NOT WORK, BUT QUESTION ONLY WHETHER PROJECT IS OVERLY DEPENDENT ON AN UNPROVEN SOCIAL PREMISE.

7. LOCATION OF PROJECT REPORTEDLY CHOSEN WITH REGARD FOR POLITICAL NEUTRALITY, RATHER THAN AVAILABILITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE. THIS MEANS PROJECT PARTICIPANTS WOULD HAVE TO DIG FOR THEIR OWN WATER AND PRODUCE THEIR OWN ELECTRICITY. ALSO, DISCUSSION OF SOIL CONDITION IN PROPOSAL RAISES QUESTION ABOUT FERTILIZER, WHICH IN CIRCUMSTANCES COULD BE CONSIDERABLE COST FACTOR. WE WONDER IF SUCH HIGH INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER COSTS COULD BE SUSTAINED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFTER AID INPUT WAS COMPLETED.

8. IN SUM, WE VIEW THIS PROJECT AS HIGH-RISK, BUT POTENTIALLY HIGH-PAYOFF ENDEAVOR. PROPOSAL HAS MANY APPEALING ASPECTS-- FOR EXAMPLE, PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL FARMERS, INTERMEDIATE TECHNOLOGY, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AID TO PCOREST STRATUM OF POPULATION. PROPOSAL'S OBJECTIVES AND TARGET GROUP ARE LAUDIBLE. WE CONCLUDE THAT, IF QUALITY OF PERSONNEL SENT TO

TOGO TO IMPLEMENT PROJECT IS HIGH, PROJECT COULD PERFORM VALUABLE SERVICES. WE ARE CONCERNED WITH PROJECT'S INTEGRATION INTO GENERAL TOGOLESE MILIEU, PARTICULARLY SO THAT IT REMAINS OPERATIVE WHEN AID INPUT IS PHASED OUT. THUS, WE WISH TO SEE HARD-HEADED ANALYSIS OF ECONOMICS OF PHASE-OUT PLAN BY COMPETENT TECHNICIANS AND MECHANISM FOR ASSURING FIRST-RATE STAFFING BEFORE PROJECT GOES AHEAD.

9. EMBASSY ECONOFF, TDY AIDOFF AND AMBASSADOR HAVE DISCUSSED PROPOSAL IN SOME DEPTH WITH MEMBERS OF LOCAL OIC GROUP OVER PAST WEEK, PLACING RESPONSIBILITY ON LATTER FOR OBTAINING GOT'S REACTION ASAP. MISSION WILL COMMUNICATE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE WHEN RECEIVED.
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